

**Medicine Bow Landscape Vegetation Analysis (LaVA)
Meeting Minutes**

**Cooperating Agencies Meeting
May 16, 2018; 9:30 am – 3:00 pm
In person, Telephone, or VTC**

In Attendance:

In person: Melissa Martin, Carolyn Upton, Tony Hoch, Kelle Reynolds, Brian Hall, Mark Conrad, Josh Peck, Jason Armbruster, Carson Engelskirger; Lee Knox, Aaron Voos, Justin Williams, Leanne Correll; Corey Class; and Lily Zahor. **On Phone:** Dena Egenhoff, Bret Callaway, and Chris Jones

Action Items:

- **Resource Specialists – General Comments:** Review reports to ensure that:
 - Project benefits are discussed and highlighted;
 - A distinction between short and long-term effects is made;
 - Analyses incorporate and reference Project Design Features and the Adaptive Implementation and Monitoring Framework;
 - Reports are consistent with direct and indirect effects disclosures; and
 - Reports take into consideration the timeframe over which the project will be implemented.
- **Specialist Reports – Specific Comments:**
 - **Silviculture/Fire and Fuels:** Provide clarification on the use of stand-replacing prescribed fires in spruce-fir timber types.
 - **Aquatics:** Change Common Trout to “Trout”
 - **Range:** Disclose acres of rangeland vegetation v. forested vegetation.
 - **Hydrology:** Display current ECA percentages and what would be allowable under the PA.
 - **Decision Triggers table:** Wording changes: “Adaptive Actions” to “Adaptive Action Options” and “will exceed” to “would exceed”
- **Adaptive Implementation Small Group:** Revise Diagrams 1 – 3; consider making ‘diagram 2’ ‘diagram 1’

Agenda Topics:

1. Forest Supervisor Time – Carolyn Upton

DISCUSSION

Thank you to everyone who continues to support the LaVA project. We are working feverishly to put the finishing touches on the DEIS and appendices. **North Savery update:** We received two objections – one general and one specific to the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail. We do not anticipate hosting an objection resolution meeting. Objection response is due May 23rd. ECA: The DEQ provided a letter to the FS related to Equivalent Clearcut Acres (ECA) – we will be reviewing the letter during our upcoming Steering Group meeting. **Farm Bill CEs:** both Ryan Park and Fox Creek have been signed and authorize up to 3,000 acres of vegetation management. **FY 18 Timber Sales:** We have two sales and a small roadside stewardship project (Sierra Madre) under contract and the Lake Owen and Devil’s Hollow stewardship projects will be advertised soon.

2. DEIS Chapter 3 – Resource Highlights – Chris Jones

DISCUSSION

Please see the attached .ppt for resource highlights. The presentation provides highlights for the Modified Proposed Action only and does not include the effects of taking No Action. An alternatives comparison table will be included in DEIS Chapter 2 and the effects of the No Action alternative will be disclosed in DEIS Chapter 3.

Presentation Comments:

The specialist reports disclose the effects of fully implementing the Proposed Action (aka, worst-case scenario) so that we know the full extent of anticipated effects. This provides assurances that the effects of ‘doing less than’ are within the bounds of the analysis. Project design features (PDFs) are part of the Proposed Action and should be analyzed as such. The PDFs were developed to mitigate resource impacts when implementing individual treatments over the life of the LaVA project.

All specialists should review their reports to ensure that:

- Project benefits are discussed and highlighted;
- Undesirable effects from the beetle epidemic are discussed and highlighted;
- A distinction between short and long-term effects is made so as not to overly inflate anticipated effects;
- Analyses incorporate and reference Project Design Features and the Adaptive Implementation and Monitoring Framework;
- Reports are consistent with direct and indirect effects disclosures; and
- Reports take into consideration the timeframe over which the project will be implemented.

CONCLUSION

Specialist reports will be reviewed in light of the above comments and updated accordingly.

3. Cooperating Agency Specialist Report Review – Melissa Martin

DISCUSSION

Cooperating Agencies were asked to review specialist reports in lieu of commenting on DEIS Chapter 3. Both cooperator comments and Forest Service responses were captured in a ‘response to comments’ style table. A draft table was provided to cooperators in advance of the meeting and a completed version is being provided to cooperators with these notes.

General comments:

Cooperators were appreciative of Forest Service responses. Most FS specialists were receptive to cooperator comments and most FS responses indicate that edits are being made to the appropriate reports.

CONCLUSION

Internal discussions will occur to ensure that all cooperator comments are addressed in a positive manner.

4. LaVA Implementation Framework – DEIS Information and Appendix – Kelle Reynolds

DISCUSSION

The Forest Service has been working to combine the three Small Group Implementation appendices (Forest Service, Cooperating Agency, and Public Engagement) into a single appendix. Leanne Correll (SERCD) was very instrumental in taking an initial stab at assimilating the appendices. The Forest’s goal is to move from what was being depicted as a ‘linear’ process into something that shows the continuous, collaborative intent behind implementation.

Cooperators were provided three Implementation diagrams in advance of the meeting as well as DEIS

verbiage to explain them. The diagrams were discussed first.

- **Diagram 1** outlines the continual process of actions and products throughout the life of the LaVA project. **Comments/Action Items:** Reference to diagram 2 is not readily distinguished; add a new 'product' (Monitoring Report) to align with Monitoring action; change "Monitoring" to "Monitoring and Reporting"; Change 'Field Work' to "Field Validation"
- **Diagram 2** is the inner circle from Diagram 1 and is meant to indicate that multiple projects, at different phases, are being implemented simultaneously. **Comments/Action Items:** Use different sized circles to represent different project stages; move title to outside of arrow and add new verbiage 'multiple projects' to diagram; consider flip-flopping the diagrams and make Diagram 2, Diagram 1; depict Diagram 1 as a 'call out' box.
- **Diagram 3** (3 Boxes): **Comments/Action Items:** Verbiage is hard to read – transfer to text boxes; develop five boxes since we have five actions.

Appendix:

The action items from Diagram 1 (greenish, outer arrows) are currently the headers for the various implementation phases (e.g., Project initialization; Feedback; Fieldwork; Review; and Monitor). The subsequent information (narrative part) describes the 'products' that are expected (e.g., Focus areas; Project Refinement; Packaged Project; and Project Implementation (consider adding a fifth product 'Monitoring Report')).

Page 8 – Project Initialization to identify Focus Areas: The FS should have already identified areas wherein management activities cannot occur before going to cooperators and the public. Need to reference 'pre-implementation checklist' and 'Decision Trigger' table.

Feedback, first bullet: generalize about public engagement opportunities.

General Comments:

- Review Forest Service v. Cooperator roles...some roles seem to be incorrectly presented.
- Display an example of an actual project's timeline (Diagram 3).

Decision-Making Triggers Table – This table is based on issues identified in DEIS Chapter 1. It presents a 'yellow light'/'red light' system for considering adaptive management options when tracking project implementation and thresholds. The Forest has developed a row for ECA which may already address the DEQ letter. This letter will be discussed on May 21.

CONCLUSION

The Adaptive Implementation and Monitoring Framework is a work in progress. We will incorporate cooperator comments and continue to strengthen the document.

5. Public Engagement Opportunities – Melissa Martin

DISCUSSION

While we are a couple of weeks off schedule, making date selections precarious, we can discuss, generally, the types of information to share; the types of venues to host; and mechanisms for messaging about opportunities.

Information suggestions include:

- Discuss how public feedback will be utilized throughout implementation;
- Use visuals wherever possible to explain concepts;
- Focus on Implementation process;
- Include resource highlights for No Action and Proposed Action;
- Upload Specialist Reports to website

Venues/Messaging Mechanisms:

- Open House only
- Open House with presentation – present computer version of ‘presentation’ on a continuous loop at a station so that people have the opportunity to view it if they miss the actual presentation;
- Videotape presentation and provide on multiple websites, including YouTube;
- Develop a FAQ, like before, and upload onto project website;
- Try to get Story Map up and running – need outside support since Liz D’Arcy left.
- Meetings may not be the best option in smaller communities; that’s where other media-type options may become more important.

Dates:

These will be contingent upon the release of the DEIS. More information will be forthcoming.

CONCLUSION

The USFS will need to receive support from cooperators to record a video of a meeting (support was tentatively offered). Create a link as well. MBRTB has no YouTube channel.

6. Meeting Wrap-up

DISCUSSION

The Notice of Availability for Federal Register publication of the DEIS has been submitted to our Washington Office;

The Forest Service will continue to work on editing specialist reports and finalizing the Implementation Framework.

CONCLUSION

- A good product that takes a couple of extra weeks to produce is more important than attaining a deadline. Let’s make sure that we’re being consistent in our display of effects and project information.
- June 20th is the next scheduled cooperator’s meeting.

Meeting adjourned.